



Helpful Websites for Finding Your German Ancestor

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The Internet can be helpful in every phase of the research process. This includes learning about *resources for finding the ancestor's German home town and accessing, reading, and understanding the records*. Limited German-language skills are helpful, but not essential for successfully researching German ancestors.

LEARNING AND SHARING

FamilySearch Research Wiki and Learning Center

The FamilySearch research Wiki (https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page) is a community-edited encyclopedia of genealogical reference information. Find information and sign in to contribute your knowledge. The Wiki is arranged by countries, counties, and towns, and research topics.

- This is a work in progress!
- Type research topic in "search" box. The Wiki is arranged geographically; topics follow FamilySearch catalog model
- Blue- has content; red- empty
- Many pages contain links to other helpful websites

The Learning Center link is found under "get help" in the top right corner of the FamilySearch.org home page. Type "Germany" in the search field to find a list of classes available online.

FamilySearch.org

Search for ancestors by name on the main page. Search features available across the website include:

- Search on any field
- Can use wildcards
- Exact search
- Surname not required

The "Family Tree" feature contains millions of patron-submitted lineage-linked genealogies. Registered users can add photos, audio clips, stories, and sources along with genealogical information.

Translation helps

GoogleTranslate (<https://translate.google.com/>) is useful in navigating foreign-language websites. Choose the "from" and "to" languages and "copy and paste" the Web address or a

text segment into the box to be translated. CAUTION: Do not use electronic translators to write requests for information!

FINDING THE GERMAN PLACE OF ORIGIN

Familysearch.org, Ancestry.com, other websites

In the 19th and early 20th Centuries, federal and state census records provide a good framework for documenting an immigrant. The 1900-1930 federal census schedules include the year of immigration and citizenship status. All other record types (i.e. vital, church, land, probate, naturalization records) available on these sites should be used to learn more about the ancestor. User-submitted information should be used with caution.

The FamilySearch Wiki contains several helpful articles:

- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Gathering_Information_to_Locate_Place_of_Origin
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Emigration_and_Immigration
- Tracing Immigrant Origins research outline
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Tracing_Immigrant_Origins

Portal: <http://www.germanroots.com/ei.html>

This website has links to emigration and immigration indexes and records, including ship passenger lists and naturalization records. As a portal, it directs the user to other websites. Most of them are free; subscription sites are marked with “(\$)”. The immigration sections are divided into “pre-1820” and “1820 to 1940s” section. Passenger lists are listed by U.S. and European ports. Under “Online German Emigration Records and Indexes” links to emigrant lists, arranged by modern German states, are listed. Some are in German; some are in English. Available information varies by state.

Portal: <http://www.roots-in-germany.de/>

A German Internet portal for emigration to America, this site includes links to passenger lists and lists of emigrants arranged by modern German state. To use:

- Click on “German resources”
- The bullet “all of Germany” leads to various passenger list collections.
- For regional lists of emigrants choose the modern German state. Be aware that some modern German states include parts of several historical areas.
- Available resources vary by state

IDENTIFYING PLACES

Meyers Gazetteer online

Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire, published in 1912, includes entries for all inhabited localities. It is now easy to search using <http://www.meyersgaz.org/> Each entry includes an image of the original entry and extracted details regarding important jurisdictions. Links to a map

and a list of nearby localities with church parishes are available for most entries. The search box accepts wild cards before, within, and after a series of letters.

Regional gazetteers, maps

- A list of regional German gazetteers online is found at https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Online_German_Gazetteers_and_Parish_Register_Inventories.
- The DigiBib (<http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Portal:DigiBib>) also includes gazetteers and parish register inventories, maps, and regional histories. Under “Geografie, Kartographie, Topographie etc.” look for:
 - Gemeinde- und Ortsverzeichnisse -community- and place listings
 - Historische Karten und Atlanten – historical maps and atlases
 - Ortsgeschichte – local history
 - Topographien – descriptive place name books
- Under “Kirche und Religion” look for:
 - Pfarrverzeichnisse (parish directories)
 - Kirchenbuchverzeichnisse (parish register inventories)
- The Ravenstein Atlas of the German Empire shows places down to the parish level. The entry in the companion gazetteer includes the coordinates used to locate each locality. Both gazetteer and maps are downloaded as PDF’s. See <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/German/German-idx?type=header&id=German.RavenAtlas> for details.

ONLINE RECORD COLLECTIONS WITH IMAGES

FamilySearch.org

Currently 63 German record collections are available on FamilySearch.org under “records”. At least some indexing has been done for eighteen of them; the others consist of browsable images. Also see “Poland”, “Russia”, “Belgium”, and “Denmark” for areas of the German Empire that have been annexed to those countries. Collections can be accessed via the map, the person search form (indexed records only), by collection title, or by browsing all collections.

Microfilmed records can be accessed through the FamilySearch Catalog. Digitized microfilm images may be freely viewable online, or accessible with restrictions. Click on the camera icon for details. A magnifying glass icon signifies that at least some records on that film have been indexed. Indexes and images may exist for a given collection without them being linked to each other.

Digitized books can be accessed through the FamilySearch Catalog and the “Books” section on FamilySearch.org. The latter also includes material from eleven partner libraries. Copyright restrictions apply to newer publications.

Matricula Online

Found at <http://data.matricula-online.eu/de/>, this portal allows free access to church records from the Roman Catholic dioceses of Passau (Bavaria), Hildesheim (Hannover), Münster (Westfalen), and Magdeburg (Sachsen-Anhalt). Also included are numerous records from Austrian diocesan and state archives.

Archion

Eventually most Evangelical archives in today's Germany will make their parish registers accessible on <https://www.archion.de/>. See this list <https://www.archion.de/de/archive-in-archion/> for participating archives. To date roughly 35 percent of potential records have been posted online, with more added regularly. This is a subscription website; costs range from about 53 Dollars for twenty days in one year to a yearly subscription for 178 Euros (roughly 200 Dollars). Search or browse for free to find available records; images can be viewed only with a valid sign-in. This site also provides access to some church records from the former Eastern Prussian provinces, which are held by the Evangelical Central Archive Berlin (EZAB)

Ancestry

Ancestry has posted many German civil registration and church records online; many are at least partially indexed. Several indexes without attached images have also been published. See <http://www.ancestry.com/cs/recent-collections>. Some collections include records from other geographic areas, so it may pay to do an "all records" search for the person sought. Large collections of church-and civil registration records for localities in the Eastern provinces of Prussia can be found by search for "Eastern Prussian" in the title field. German address books are among the most recent online publications.

Other record portals

- Civil registration records: <http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Kategorie:Online-Personenstandsregister>
- Church records: http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Kirchenb%C3%BCcher_online
- Civil and church records online for various countries: <https://www.familia-austria.at/index.php/forschung-und-service/netzrecherche/111-matriken-im-netz>
- Poland: <http://www.lostshoebox.com/poland/online-records/> links to several online collections of records in today's Poland

TOWN GENEALOGIES

A portal for online genealogies is found at <http://www.online-ofb.de>. Currently the site includes 637 books with over 8.5 million entries. Use the "Meta-search" feature to search for names in all books at once. An extensive bibliography of printed town genealogies is also available at <http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Kategorie:Ortsfamilienbuch>. More information is found at

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany Town Genealogies and Parish Register Inve
ntories on the Internet](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Town_Genealogies_and_Parish_Register_Invntories_on_the_Internet) .

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

- The German archive portal <https://www.archivportal-d.de/> provides one-step access to state, town, manorial, family, and other archives. It can be searched by state, town, name, keyword, time period, and other criteria. This is an uncomplicated way to locate a community archive or historical town images.
- The German Digital Library at <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/> provides online access to over nine million digitized objects, including books, photographs, and postcards.
- The modern online telephone book is found at <https://www.dastelefonbuch.de/> .
- Surname distribution maps can be generated at <http://geogen.stoepel.net/>
- Genealogical word lists are found on the Familysearch Wiki (https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page) Search for them by language (German, Latin, French, Dutch, Polish etc.). Some word lists are available in PDF format for easy printing.
- German history in documents and images, found at <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/> helps the user understand the world of his ancestors. The history of Germany from 1500 on is presented in ten sections, each with an introduction, key documents, images, and maps.